

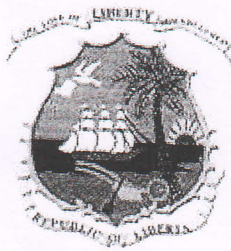
**OFFICIAL VISIT IN BENIN OF HER EXCELLENCY MADAM  
ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF LIBERIA**

September 9 - 10, 2009



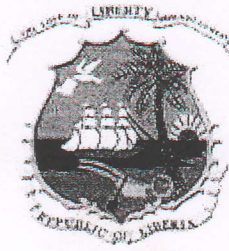
**JOINT COMMUNIQUE**





1. At the invitation of her Brother and Friend, his Excellency Doctor Boni YAYI, President of the Republic of Benin, Head of state, Head of Government, Her Excellency Madam Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF, President of the Republic of Liberia, paid an official visit to Benin from September 9 - 10, 2009. The official list of Liberian delegation is attached.
2. Upon arrival at Cardinal Bernardin GANTIN International airport in Cotonou, President Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF and members of her delegation were welcomed by President Dr. Boni YAYI, accompanied by the members of his Government, Presidents of Institutions of the Republic, representatives of constituted bodies, members of the diplomatic and consular corps and a huge crowd extended a hearty welcome to their guest.
3. The visit of the President of Liberia is in response to the invitation extended to her by President of Benin during his two-day working visit to Liberia from August 7-8, 2007. The visit is also intended to reinforce the friendship and cooperation between the countries and Benin's pledge to support the reconstruction efforts of Liberia under the leadership of President Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF since her assumption of office on January 16, 2006.

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4. During the visit, both Heads of State held discussions relating to bilateral cooperation, the socio- political situation in Africa and the rest of the world.

The discussions were held in an atmosphere of fraternal understanding and mutual confidence. Both leaders expressed their determination to work cooperatively, together to improve the welfare and wellbeing of their people.

In this regard the President of Liberia expressed appreciation to the President of Benin for the commitment of the Government of Benin to provide technical military assistance to the Armed Forces of Liberia under the Agreement signed in Cotonou on the 28<sup>th</sup> of march 2009, and noted that the agreement will assist the Armed Forces of Liberia in its drive to develop into a trained disciplined and professional army.

5. In order to expand the legal framework of this cooperation, the following Agreements were concluded between the two countries during the visit of the Liberian President :
  - Cultural Agreement between Benin and Liberia ;
  - Agreement for technical cooperation between Benin and Liberia in the field of education and higher education.
6. In the spirit of cooperation both leaders expressed their commitment to build a fruitful economic partnership in the interest of both countries, and

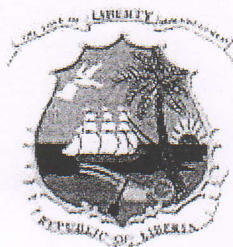


more specifically to support Liberian reconstruction efforts and economic recovery.

7. The President of Liberia, Her Excellency Madam Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF briefed her Benin counterpart on the progress achieved by her country since taking office, particularly the Government development programme based on the poverty reduction strategy and the national reconciliation process.
8. President Boni YAYI commended the President of Liberia for her relentless efforts for the consolidation of peace and national security, economic recovery, governance and the rule of law, the restoration of infrastructures and provision of basic services.
9. In order to enhance cooperation between both countries, the two Presidents instructed their relevant Ministers to fully implement the four bilateral agreements signed in Monrovia in the following areas:

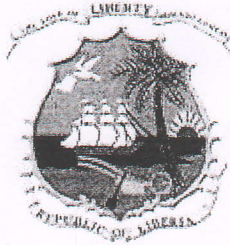
- The framework agreement
- The creation of joint commission;
- The education, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation agreement;

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- The cooperation agreement between the foreign ministries of the two countries.
10. President Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF and President Boni YAYI reviewed issues of international concern such as socio-political crises in Africa, the world economic and financial crisis, acts of piracy and other armed conflicts which threaten peace and stability in Africa and in the world.
  11. Both Heads of State exchanged views mainly on the situation in West Africa and expressed satisfaction at the efforts expended in favour of peace and economic development in the sub-region.
  12. Recalling the situation in Côte-d'Ivoire, both Heads of State expressed their delight over the harmonious development of the peace process since the signature on March 4, 2007 of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and they have expressed the wish that the presidential elections scheduled for November 29, 2009 will be held in peace, tranquillity and transparency.
  13. They commended the positive development in Guinea-Bissau and in Mauritania, with the holding of peaceful presidential elections in both countries. They expressed the need to steadfastly support the African

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Union in its efforts to put an end to conflicts which very often undermine the African continent and delay its economic development.

14. On the situation in the Republic of Guinea the two leaders expressed the hope that that sister country will undergo a smooth transition to democratic rule which they consider as vital to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Mano River sub-region.

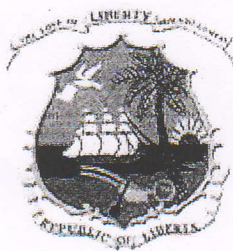
15. As regards the political situation in Niger the two Heads of State commended the efforts being made by the ECOWAS to preserve peace and stability in the country.

16. Both Heads of State applauded the peaceful transition in Gabon following the death of President Omar BONGO ONDIMBA until the holding of presidential election on August 30, 2009.

While congratulating the President-elect, Mr Ali Ben BONGO ONDIMBA for his election they urge all political forces of the country to work for peace and national concord in their country.

17. During her stay, President JOHNSON SIRLEAF paid a visit to the Songhai Project Centre in Porto-Novo.

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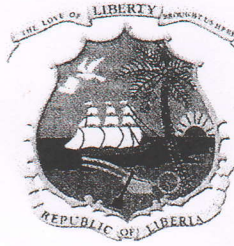
In this connection the President of Liberia noted the fact of the adaptation of cooperation established with the enterprising and innovative agricultural programme of Centre Songhai. She expressed her Government's appreciation for the fact that this cooperation has enabled thirty (30) young Liberians to receive technical agricultural skills from Benin. These trained Liberians are presently training more than twenty (20) other Liberians in the Bensonville Centre Songhai Liberia programme in the field of agriculture.

The President indicated further that she looks forward to more technical support from Centre Songhai Benin that will drive Centre Songhai Liberia from its current stage to a more functional agriculture enterprise.

18. Consequently during this visit the two Presidents, building on the experience of Republic of Benin expressed their commitment to continue regular exchange of experience in agriculture, including rural mechanization farming.

19. The President of Benin, His Excellency Dr Boni YAYI conferred upon Her Excellency Madam Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF the nation's highest distinction, The Grand Cross in the National Order.

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## **LIST OF THE OFFICIAL DELEGATION OF LIBERIA**

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- 1- **Her Excellency Mrs. Olubanke KING-AKERELE** - Minister of Foreign Affairs
- 2- **Honorable Mr. Brownie SAMUKAI** - Minister of Defense
- 3- **Honorable Mrs. Florence CHENOWETH** - Minister of Agriculture
- 4- **Honorable Mrs. Etmonia David TARPEH** - Minister of Youth and Sports
- 5- **Her Excellency Ms. Vivienne T. WREH** - Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
- 6- **Mr Carney JOHNSON** - Special guest of the President.

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20. At the end of her stay in Benin, President Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF extended her gratitude to her counterpart, Doctor Boni YAYI, to his Government and to the brother nation Benin for the warm, fraternal welcome, and genuine African hospitality she and her delegation received.

21. Her Excellency Madam Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF proposed, and His Excellency Dr Boni YAYI agreed, that the two Heads of States will exchange periodic visits to hold talks on matters of mutual interests aimed at promoting closer cooperation between the two countries and peoples.

Done in Cotonou, on September 10, 2009

The French and English versions are equally authentic.

For the Government of the  
Republic of Liberia

For the Government of  
the Republic of Benin

  
**Mrs. Olubanke KING-AKERELE**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

  
**Jean-Marie EHOZOU**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration,  
Francophonie et Benin Diaspora